

In the Claims (clean copy as amended)

Kindly amend the Claims as follows:

DA
C1

1. (Amended) A method for converting aromatic hydrocarbons to C7 and C8 aromatic hydrocarbons, which method comprises contacting a starting material comprising aromatic hydrocarbons, wherein said aromatic hydrocarbons comprise benzene and other aromatic hydrocarbons containing a non-aromatic compound content of 1 % by weight or less, with a catalyst to perform at least one reaction selected from the group consisting of transalkylation, dealkylation and disproportionation, thereby converting said starting material into C7 or C8 aromatic hydrocarbons, wherein hydrogen is present in said reaction.

C1
A15

2. (Amended) A method for converting aromatic hydrocarbons to C7 and C8 aromatic hydrocarbons, which method comprises contacting a starting material comprising aromatic hydrocarbons, wherein said hydrocarbons comprise at least benzene, and a non-aromatic compound content of greater than 1% by weight, with a catalyst in the presence of hydrogen to perform at least one reaction selected from the group consisting of transalkylation, dealkylation, and disproportionation, wherein said non-aromatic compounds are first removed from a crude aromatic hydrocarbon material that contains said benzene and non-aromatic compounds, thereby reducing the non-aromatic compound content of said material to 1 % by weight or less, and thereafter the material is converted in said reaction into C7 or C8 aromatic hydrocarbons.

3. (Amended) The method for converting aromatic hydrocarbons as claimed in any one of claims 1 and 2, wherein said aromatic hydrocarbon conversion reaction is transalkylation.

PA16
C1

5. (Amended) The method for converting aromatic hydrocarbons as claimed in Claim 1 or 2, wherein the starting material contains C9+ alkyl-aromatic hydrocarbons.

6. (Amended) The method for converting aromatic hydrocarbons as claimed in claim 5, wherein said benzene and said C9+ aromatic hydrocarbons in the starting material are reduced and C7 and C8 aromatic hydrocarbons in the product are produced.

7. (Amended) The method for converting aromatic hydrocarbons as claimed in Claim 1 or 2, wherein said catalyst contains zeolite. *obj-ct*

C 8. (Amended) The method for converting aromatic hydrocarbons as claimed in Claim 1 or 2, wherein said catalyst contains at least one of metals of Group VIB, Group VIIB and Group VIII of the Periodic Table. *obj-ct*

7/6 9. (Amended) The method for converting aromatic hydrocarbons as claimed in Claim 1 or 2, wherein said catalyst contains mordenite and rhenium.

7/6 10. (Amended) A method for producing C7 and C8 aromatic hydrocarbons, which comprises mixing a fraction obtained through gasoline fractionation comprising benzene, with an aromatic hydrocarbon material that contains C9+ aromatic hydrocarbons to create a mixture having a non-aromatic compound content greater than 1% by weight, reducing said non-aromatic compound content of said mixture to 1 % by weight or less, then reacting the mixture with a catalyst to thereby convert the aromatic hydrocarbons therein, and separating the resulting C7 and C8 aromatic hydrocarbons from the reaction mixture.

Please cancel Claim 4 without prejudice and without disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein.